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Fitting in: The Roles of Social Acceptance and Discrimination in Shaping the Daily Psychological Well-Being of Latino Youth

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Abstract

Objectives—We examine how acculturation experiences such as discrimination and social acceptance influence the daily psychological well-being of Latino youth living in newly emerging and historical receiving immigrant communities.

Methods—We use data on 557 Latino youth enrolled in high school in Los Angeles or in rural or urban North Carolina.

Results—Compared to Latino youth in Los Angeles, Latino youth in urban and rural North Carolina experienced higher levels of daily happiness, but also experienced higher levels of daily depressive and anxiety symptoms. Differences in nativity status partially explained location differences in youths' daily psychological well-being. Discrimination and daily negative ethnic treatment worsened; whereas social acceptance combined with daily positive ethnic treatment and ethnic and family identification improved daily psychological well-being.

Conclusions—Our analysis contributes to understanding the acculturation experiences of immigrant youth and the roles of social context in shaping adolescent mental health.

Keywords

Latino; Hispanic; Mental Health; Assimilation

Today's Latino immigrants and US-born Latinos no longer solely live in historical immigrant receiving communities with large urban centers (e.g., Los Angeles and New York City) but are moving to mid-sized metropolitan areas and rural locations in new settlement states, particularly in the South (Massey, 2008). This dispersion creates significant policy challenges, as communities in new receiving states struggle to meet the needs of their changing citizenry.

One challenge faced by new receiving communities is learning how to promote the mental well-being of Latino youth. Research indicates that compared to their White, Asian, and frequently Black peers, Latino youth are at increased risk for several poor mental health outcomes such as anxiety and depression (Roberts et al., 2006). A multitude of culture-related stressors (e.g., experiencing discrimination) increase Latino youths' risk for poor

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mental health outcomes, while strong family connections, ethnic ties, and social supports minimize the influence of these acculturation stressors (Gonzales, Fabrett, and Knight, 2009). However, this previous research on Latino adolescent mental health is based primarily on studies conducted in major metropolitan areas within historical receiving states. Few studies have examined how the acculturation experiences of foreign-born and US-born Latino adolescents residing in rural and urban communities in new receiving states shape their mental health and none have compared their experiences to Latino youth residing in historical receiving communities.

Given the differing contexts of reception in new versus historical receiving communities, Latino immigrant youth in new receiving communities are likely to face different acculturation challenges than their peers in more established communities. Moreover, given variation in institutional supports, the prevalence of these challenges may differ between new receiving urban and rural communities. This paper examines how differences in the acculturation experiences of Latino youth living in North Carolina (NC), a new receiving state with urban and rural settlement communities, and Latino youth living in Los Angeles (LA), a historical receiving city, shape adolescent daily psychological well-being. These three settlement locations—NC urban, NC rural, and LA—typify their respective category. Of all new receiving states NC experienced the fastest rate of growth in its Latino immigrant population (concentrated in both urban and rural areas) between 1990 and 2006, and LA is the leading gateway city within California, the primary historical destination state for Latino immigrants (Massey, 2008).

Using individual-level random effect models, we assess how baseline and daily positive and negative social interactions in school and at home affect the daily psychological well-being of Latino youth. Our analysis contributes to understanding the acculturation experiences of immigrant youth and the roles of social context in shaping adolescent mental health.

Social Context of Reception

No matter where immigrants settle, the migration process encompasses stressful events that can harm the mental well-being of immigrants (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). According to the theory of segmented assimilation (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006), the success of an immigrant's adaptation depends on a multitude of factors that comprise the social context of reception (e.g., unemployment rates, poverty rates, and levels of discrimination). Residing in a supportive, co-ethnic enclave can mitigate the deleterious impact of some of these negative aspects of social context and lead to fewer mental health problems (Gonzales, Fabrett and Knight, 2009). Moreover, shared cultural values and culturally prescribed adult-child relationships in co-ethnic communities can create a form of ethnic social capital that facilitates youth's adaptation (Pong and Hao, 2007).

Because the Latino population in NC grew by 394% between 1990–2000, few co-ethnic enclaves have developed and the state has had limited infrastructure to support Latino youth (Perreira, Chapman, and Livas-Stein, 2006). As a result, Latino youth moving into both urban and rural NC must learn to adapt to life in the US in an environment without a strong co-ethnic presence and where many public institutions lack the resources to provide linguistically and culturally appropriate services (Perreira, Chapman, Livas-Stein, 2006). In contrast, Latinos make-up the largest ethnic/racial group in LA, and their presence in the area predates that of Anglos. Because LA has had a long history of Mexican settlement and providing services to Latinos, many Latinos are highly integrated into their communities and have well-established co-ethnic networks (Saito, 1998). Others, however, have become socially-isolated into communities replete with poverty and unemployment, neighborhood factors that hinder youth's development (Wilson, 1987). Thus, like NC, LA still faces challenges in meeting the needs of its Latino populations, but unlike NC, LA has a stronger

infrastructure and more social and political resources to help it meet these challenges. Nevertheless, given the relative lack of infrastructure to support immigrant and Latino enclaves in NC, we expect that youth in NC will experience higher levels of depression and anxiety (and lower levels of happiness) than youth in LA.

Youth in rural areas of NC potentially experience an even greater disadvantage. Though still lower than in urban areas, research on residential segregation indicates that during the 1990s segregation increased more in new receiving rural counties than in historical receiving rural counties (Kandel and Cromartie, 2004). Yet due to the small size of rural communities interracial social interactions potentially occur more frequently than in urban areas (Waters and Jiménez, 2005). Moreover, ethnic social capital and supportive public infrastructures are even less developed in rural areas than urban ones. Overall, increasing residential segregation combined with frequent interracial contact and a lack of supportive resources may increase rural youth's exposure to discrimination and the potential for depression and anxiety.

Nativity Status

Differences in the psychological well-being of youth living in NC (both urban and rural) and LA may also reflect differences in the percentages of migrants who are foreign-born in these communities. Latinos in new receiving communities, especially rural areas, are more likely to be recent arrivals than Latinos in historical receiving communities (Massey, 2008). Additionally, evidence suggests that mental health outcomes vary by immigrant generation, though the direction of this variation is unclear. Some studies find higher rates of psychological distress among first- and second-generation immigrants (Bankston and Zhou, 2002; Kao, 1999); while others conclude that first-generation, foreign-born youth are at lower risk of depression and other poor mental health outcomes than their second-generation peers (Harker, 2001; Harris, 1999).

Two theories—acculturative stress and immigrant optimism— help explain differences in mental health status by nativity and why different studies find conflicting results. Acculturative stress theory emphasizes how migration and adaptation processes heighten stress and reduce overall mental well-being (Padilla and Duran, 1995). Foreign-born adolescents experience more acculturative stress than US-born adolescents due to the challenges of learning a second language, changing family dynamics, and adjusting to new social norms (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006;). Consequently, acculturative stress theory predicts that foreign-born youth will experience greater mental health problems. In contrast, optimism theories focus on immigrants' frames of reference and argue that upon entering the US, foreign-born adolescents expect to encounter challenges but optimistically believe they can overcome these challenges and succeed (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). From this perspective, foreign-born youth will be more resilient and experience more positive psychological well-being than their US-born peers.

Discrimination and Social Acceptance

National evidence suggests that discrimination against Latinos may be a prevalent problem in LA and urban and rural NC. A Pew Hispanic Center (2010) survey found that almost a quarter of Americans (23%) believed Hispanics were discriminated against “a lot” in society, a share higher than observed for any other racial/ethnic group, including Blacks (18%).

Discrimination experiences negatively shape the social context of reception and can impede the acculturation process (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). Discrimination creates structural barriers that limit access to valued social roles, hinders the development of supportive social

relationships (Kuperminc et al., 2009), and can result in lower self-esteem (Greene, Way, and Pahl, 2006) and overall mental health (Gonzales, Fabrett, and Knight, 2009). In contrast, positive social interactions and social acceptance can help immigrant youth cope with acculturation challenges and promote psychological well-being (Kuperminc et al., 2009). More than just the absence of discrimination, social acceptance promotes equal status, distills negative stereotypes, and renews students' commitments to their ethnic selves (Kuperminc et al., 2009). In accordance with current research, we expect that discrimination will be negatively associated with daily psychological well-being; whereas, social acceptance will be positively associated with daily psychological well-being.

Moreover, we expect that the prevalence of discrimination and acceptance will differ for Latino youth in both urban and rural NC as well as LA, which in turn, could explain observed differences in their daily psychological well-being. Because communities in new receiving states are more economically and racially integrated than historical ethnic enclaves (Massey, 2008), Latino youth in these communities have more opportunity for interracial contact (Blau 1977). According to contact theory, this interracial contact may improve ethnic relations if both groups expect and perceive equal group status within the interaction (Emerson, Kimbro, and Yancey, 2002). But, if unequal group status is perceived, negative ethnic relations can result. Thus, the greater physical integration of Latino youth in NC compared to Latino youth in LA may lead to both more positive and more negative social interactions at the same time. The prevalence of these interactions may be highest in rural NC where communities are smaller.

Social Identity: Ethnic and Family Identification

In examining how the daily psychological well-being of Latino adolescents living in urban and rural NC compares to those in LA, we consider the potential influence of two aspects of social identity -- ethnic and family identification. Ethnic identity represents the extent to which adolescents positively view and connect with their ethnic backgrounds and feel that their ethnicity is an integral part of their identities, and family identity represents the extent to which adolescents feel connected to their families and the importance of their families to their overall identity. Research finds that both ethnic and family identity can protect immigrant youth from negative social influences and buffer them from the detrimental influences of discrimination (Greene, Way, and Pahl, 2006; Padilla and Duran, 1995). Thus, we expect that ethnic and family identity will be positively related to daily psychological well-being.

METHODS

Data

This paper uses data from two companion studies, the *UCLA Study of Adolescents' Daily Lives* and the *Southern Immigrant Academic Adaptation* study, that assess the acculturation experiences of Latino youth, their health, and their education. Because these two studies focus on immigrant youth they provide more information on the multiple stressors and protective factors that shape the acculturation process than any national datasets. Moreover, these two studies provide a rare opportunity to assess how acculturation experiences operate on a daily basis. The combined data include 557 Latino adolescents (318 in LA; 239 in NC) enrolled in 9th grade during the 2005–06 (LA) and 2006–07 (NC) school years. The LA youth were selected from 9th graders attending 3 public high schools in the LA. NC youth were selected through a stratified cluster sample of urban and rural high schools with at least 24 Latino students enrolled in 9th grade in 2000. The final NC sample included students from 4 urban and 5 rural schools.

Students in both studies completed the same questionnaires and 14 daily diary checklists in their preferred language (English or Spanish). The questionnaires gathered information regarding the students' immigration histories, socioeconomic backgrounds, language use, family relationships, ethnic identification, educational attitudes, and physical and mental health. Upon finishing the questionnaires students were given a set of 14 daily diary checklists to complete before bedtime for the next two-week period. The checklists included yes/no questions about: (1) negative events and stressors, (2) time spent on school, work, and family activities, (3) academic engagement, (4) feelings and daily mental health, and (5) role fulfillment.

Sample

After deleting missing observations on the dependent ($N=19$) and independent variables ($N=75$), the analytic sample consisted of 463 Latino youth ($LA=253$; NC urban= 114 ; NC rural= 96) who contributed between 1 and 14 daily diary observations.¹ We observed a total of 6,140 person-days for daily depressive symptoms, 6,140 for daily anxiety, and 6,131 for daily happiness. The average age of participants was 15 and the sample was evenly split between genders (see Table 1). While the majority of Los Angelinos (72%) had foreign-born parents, North Carolinians in both urban and rural areas were significantly more likely to be immigrants themselves (NC urban= 72% ; NC rural= 60% ; $LA=17\%$). For both LA and urban and rural NC the majority of Latino youth were of Mexican descent.

Measures

Daily Psychological Well-Being—Using the Profile of Mood States (POMS) (Lorr and McNair, 1971), students reported their feelings across 19 items on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely). By calculating average responses across non-missing items, we created three subscales from POMS (Yip and Fuligni, 2002): daily happiness (happy, joy, calm) ($\alpha = .84$), daily depressive symptoms (sad, discouraged, hopeless) ($\alpha = .78$), and daily anxiety (on edge, nervous, uneasy, unable to concentrate) ($\alpha = .75$).²

Location of Residence—We identified 3 distinct social contexts in our sample using dummy (0/1) variables to indicate residence in rural NC, urban NC, and LA.

Discrimination—We created a baseline and daily discrimination measure. For the baseline measure we followed the work of Mendoza Denton et al. (2002) and created a perceived likelihood of discrimination measure based on four hypothetical situations of mistreatment due to race (e.g., watched by a store clerk and not chosen by a teacher) presented to the respondent. Responses to the 4-items were averaged and scores ranged from one to five with higher scores indicating greater likelihood. The scale possessed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .81$). From the daily diary checklist, we measured daily experiences of discrimination based on students' yes or no response to the following statement: (1) "something bad happened to you or you were treated poorly because of your race or ethnicity." From their response we created a dichotomous negative ethnic/racial treatment variable (1=experienced negative treatment; 0 otherwise).

¹Following Allison (2002), we verified that missing data on our independent variables was not related to our dependent variables by regressing a missing dummy indicator onto each dependent variable. The dummy variable was not related to any of our dependent variables.

²We used two validity checks of our dependent variables. First, the number of days students reported feeling moderately to extremely depressed vs. anxious was positively correlated ($r = .77$) and days depressed vs. happy was negatively correlated ($r = -.10$). Second, in NC only, students completed the 20-item CES-D scale (Radloff, 1977), where a score of 16 or more indicates significant symptoms of depression. NC Students who reported feeling moderately to extremely depressed or moderately to extremely anxious on at least 3 out of 14 days had an average CES-D score of 22.79 or 23.37, respectively.

Social Acceptance—We defined social acceptance along two baseline measures—school climate and adult encouragement—and one daily measure—positive ethnic treatment. Adapted from Tyler and DeGoey (1995), our 5-item measure of school climate (e.g., teachers treat students fairly and adults at school respect my ideas) taps the extent to which students feel that they are respected and valued by the school. Our measure of adult encouragement is based on responses to two items regarding how often adults at school have encouraged a student to take honors courses and to continue his/her education after high school. Both measures ranged from one to five and possessed good internal consistency—school climate ($\alpha = .87$) and adult encouragement ($\alpha = .73$). The correlation between them was $r = .29$. We created a daily social acceptance variable based on the student's response to the following statement: "something good happened to you or you were treated well because of your race or ethnicity" (1 = experienced positive treatment; 0 otherwise). Positive and negative ethnic treatment were positively correlated ($r = .23$). Thus, some youth experienced both negative and positive treatment.

Social Identity—We measured student's social identification with both their ethnic and family group. To measure ethnic identification we combined two components of cultural orientation: (1) ethnic affirmation and belonging from a subscale of 7 items (e.g., I understand what my ethnic group membership means to me and I participate in cultural practices of my own group) on the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure developed by Phinney (1992), and (2) ethnic identity centrality and regard based on a 15-item measure (e.g., my ethnic group is an important part of my self-image and I feel a strong attachment to my ethnic group) adapted from the work of Sellers et al. (1997). These two measures were highly correlated ($r = .80$), so we created a combined ethnic identity measure by averaging across all items of each subscale. The combined ethnic identification index ranged from one to five and had a good internal consistency ($\alpha = .86$).

To measure family identification we combined two measures of youths' sense of family identification: (1) family respect derived from six items where students evaluate the importance of respecting parents and making sacrifices for the family (Fuligni, Tseng, and Lam, 1996), and (2) family future support derived from six items on how important students believe it is to help their family in the future or live or go to college near their parents (Fuligni, Tseng, and Lam, 1996). Because these measures were highly correlated ($r = .65$) we combined them into one family identification measure by averaging all items across each subscale. The combined family identification index ranged from one to five and possessed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .86$).

In addition to measuring baseline family identification, we measured daily fluctuations in whether youth reported getting along with their parents each day (1 = yes, 0 otherwise) and whether youth spent time with family each day (1 = yes, 0 otherwise). Youth were classified as having spent time with their families if they responded yes to one of three items -- ate a meal with your family, spent leisure time with your family, or spent time with family members.

Demographic and Other Control Variables—All regression estimates controlled for key demographic variables known to influence mental health— gender, age, two-parent family structure, and parental education (less than high school vs. high school graduate).³ In addition, we control for whether the observation occurred on a weekend day (=1) or not

³While parent education is a strong indicator of SES, financial distress may also contribute to youth's psychological well-being. In NC (but not LA), youth completed an index of financial distress. In models utilizing only the NC sample, we found that financial distress was associated with depression and anxiety but not happiness. It did not, however, change the results suggesting that its exclusion from our combined LA-NC analysis does not bias our estimated coefficients.

(=0). Lastly, for descriptive purposes only, we measured immigrant generation (1st generation are youth born abroad to foreign-born parents, 2nd generation are youth born in the US to foreign-born parents, and 3rd generation are US-born youth with US-born parents), age of entry, country of birth, and country of heritage using student self-reports about their and their parents' migration history.⁴

Analytical Strategy

To summarize difference in the acculturation experiences of Latino youth in rural NC, urban NC and LA, we evaluate mean differences in daily psychological well-being, discrimination, social acceptance, social identity, and daily race-ethnicity interactions and family interactions by location of residence. To evaluate differences in our daily variables, we calculated the 14-day average of each daily variable for each student and then evaluated mean differences in the average daily variables. Finally, we modeled the effects of baseline and daily social interactions on daily psychological well-being by estimating a series of 5 individual-level random effects models for each outcome variable.⁵ All regressions used Huber/White/sandwich robust variance estimates and corrected for clustering at the school level.⁶

To highlight differences in mental health by location of residence and the factors explaining these differences, we first estimate baseline models including only the location of residence covariates – NC rural, NC urban, and LA (Model A). Covariates for foreign-born status (Model B), discrimination experiences (Model C), social acceptance (Model D), and social identity (Model E) are then added sequentially to the baseline model. In estimations (not shown), Chow tests analyzing differences in estimations between NC and LA failed to reject the null hypothesis that the parameter estimates for the NC sample did not significantly differ from those for the LA sample. Thus, our location indicators sufficiently control for location differences.

RESULTS

Daily Psychological Well-Being in North Carolina and Los Angeles

Latino youth from both urban and rural NC experienced higher levels of daily depressive symptoms than youth from LA and Latino youth from rural NC also experienced higher levels of daily anxiety (Table 2 part A). At the same time, both urban and rural North Carolinian youth reported higher levels of daily happiness. After we adjusted for students' gender, age, and socioeconomic status, differences in daily happiness and depressive symptoms persisted, and Latino youth living in rural NC were still more likely to experience daily anxiety (Table 3 part A).

The Effect of Nativity Status on Daily Psychological Well-Being

The significant difference in the proportion of foreign-born living in urban and rural NC vs. LA (Table 1) raises concerns that nativity status is confounding the relationship between daily psychological well-being and location of residence. In comparison to US-born students, foreign-born students experienced higher levels of daily depressive symptoms ($M_{FB}=1.74$; $SD_{FB}=.71$; $M_{US}=1.43$; $SD_{US}=.52$; $p < .001$), anxiety ($M_{FB}=1.75$; $SD_{FB}=.67$;

⁴In additional multivariate analyses (not shown), mental health outcomes did not vary by age of entry or between 2nd and 3rd generation. Country of heritage also never significantly affected mental health. For parsimony, these variables were excluded from our final analyses.

⁵To evaluate the robustness of our results, we also estimated individual fixed effect models. While results were similar, we prefer random effects allowing us to assess time invariant factors.

⁶We found similar results with school fixed effect models, but prefer clustering because it allows for identification of all parameters.

$M_{US}=1.58$; $SD_{US}=.54$; $p < .01$), and happiness ($M_{FB}=3.64$; $SD_{FB}=.95$; $M_{US}=3.40$; $SD_{US}=.81$; $p < .01$).

When we controlled for these nativity status differences (Table 3 Part C), we found that the advantage NC's youth had in terms of daily happiness was partially accounted for by their foreign-born status. The coefficients on NC urban and NC rural youth declined from .29 to .22 and .28 to .23 (respectively) with the addition of foreign-born to the model, but remained significant. Additionally, after controlling for foreign-born status, we found no location difference in daily depressive well-being for Latino youth. The coefficients on NC urban and NC rural declined and were no longer significant. We also found that foreign-born status largely accounted for the higher anxiety levels among NC rural youth. The coefficient declined from .17 to .12 and remained only marginally significant. Lastly, we found that foreign-born youth experienced significantly higher levels of daily depressive symptoms and marginally higher levels of anxiety and happiness than US-born students, regardless of their place of residence.

Social Discrimination and Daily Psychological Well-Being

Differences in discrimination experienced between youth in NC and LA may explain differences in daily psychological well-being. Indeed, youth in NC perceived a greater likelihood of experiencing discrimination (Table 2 part B), and youth in rural NC perceived an even greater likelihood of discrimination than youth in urban NC. Additionally, rural NC youth reported experiencing more daily negative ethnic treatment than youth in LA. This greater exposure to discrimination existed regardless of nativity status. Compared to foreign-born youth in LA, foreign-born youth in NC perceived a greater likelihood of experiencing discrimination ($M_{FBNC} = 2.81$; $SD_{FBNC} = 1.17$; $M_{FBLA} = 2.03$; $SD_{FBLA} = .88$, $p < .001$) and experienced more daily negative ethnic treatment ($M_{FBNC} = .06$; $SD_{FBNC} = .16$; $M_{FBLA} = .02$; $SD_{FBLA} = .04$, $p < .01$). Similarly, US-born youth in NC perceived a greater likelihood of experiencing discrimination than US-born youth in LA ($M_{USNC} = 2.41$; $SD_{USNC} = 1.05$; $M_{USLA} = 2.11$; $SD_{USLA} = 1.00$, $p < .05$).

Despite their greater likelihood of perceiving and experiencing discrimination, Latino youth in NC still expressed higher levels of daily happiness than their LA peers (Table 3, part C). The NC urban and NC rural coefficients remained largely unchanged with the addition of discrimination to the model. As a result, differences in perceived and experienced discrimination did not explain differences in psychological well-being between youth living in NC and LA. Instead, the results indicate that discrimination is detrimental to youth's daily psychological well-being, regardless of their location. Perceived discrimination had a significant effect on daily depressive symptoms and anxiety, and negative ethnic treatment had a significant effect on daily depressive symptoms and a marginally significant effect on daily happiness and anxiety.

Social Acceptance and Daily Psychological Well-Being

At the same time that youth in NC reported a greater likelihood of discrimination than their peers in LA, they also reported more positive school climates, encouragement from school adults, and more positive ethnic treatment (Table 2, part B). These location differences persisted even after we accounted for nativity status differences. Foreign-born youth in NC experienced more positive ethnic treatment than their foreign-born peers in LA ($M_{FBNC} = .15$; $SD_{FBNC} = .27$; $M_{FBLA} = .08$; $SD_{FBLA} = .16$, $p < .05$), and US-born youth in NC reported more positive school climates ($M_{USNC} = 3.63$; $SD_{USNC} = 1.07$; $M_{USLA} = 3.33$; $SD_{USLA} = .92$, $p < .05$) than their US-born peers in LA. Thus, we added these measures of social acceptance to our random effects models.

A positive school climate and positive ethnic treatment were associated with improved daily happiness and partially accounted for the higher levels of happiness experienced by NC's youth compared to LA's youth (Table 3, part D). The marginal significance of the coefficient on NC urban and the attenuation of both the NC urban and NC rural coefficients (from .22 to .12 and .25 to .19, respectively) indicates that the higher levels of social acceptance among NC's Latino youth contributed to their higher levels of happiness. As expected, positive school climate was negatively associated with daily depressive symptoms and anxiety. Unexpectedly, adult school encouragement and positive ethnic treatment were positively associated with anxiety.

Effects of Social Identity on Daily Psychological Well-Being

Latino youth in NC, especially urban NC, expressed a significantly stronger sense of ethnic identification and family identification than Latino youth in LA (Table 2 part B). On a daily basis, youth in LA reported getting along with their parents more often than youth in urban NC and youth in all three locations reported spending time with their family on nearly every day of the study period (80–83% of 14 days). To assess the influence of these differences in ethnic and family identification, we added these variables to the random effect models.

Although family identity and positive daily parent-child relationships had a significant effect on daily levels of anxiety and happiness, only daily parent-child relationships had a significant effect on daily depressive symptoms (Table 3, part E). On the days youth spent time with family, they had lower levels of depressive symptoms and anxiety (marginally significant). Ethnic identity was not associated with daily happiness but was negatively associated with depressive symptoms and anxiety. Overall, these results suggest that social acceptance and social identity contribute independently to Latino youth's daily psychological well-being.

DISCUSSION

We provide the first assessment of how differences in acculturation experiences and social contexts of reception in new vs. historical receiving communities shape the psychological well-being of Latino youth. We examine how positive and negative social interactions in schools, the community, and the family influence the psychological well-being of Latino youth growing up in NC, a new receiving state with urban and rural settlement communities, and LA, a historical receiving city.

We found higher levels of both positive and negative daily psychological well-being among youth living in NC compared to youth in LA and found no differences in daily psychological well-being between youth living in rural and urban NC. North Carolinians in both areas experienced more happiness on a daily basis and more symptoms of depression, but only rural youth experienced more anxiety. We found that both overall and *daily* social interactions influenced the daily psychological well-being of Latino youth. Negative social interactions in youths' schools and communities significantly increased their psychological distress (i.e. depression and anxiety), while positive social interactions, especially feeling respected by teachers, significantly increased positive well-being and reduced psychological distress.

Unexpectedly, we found that both daily positive ethnic treatment and encouragement from school adults were positively associated with anxiety. Thus, while positive ethnic treatment promoted daily happiness, it also contributed to feelings of anxiety. This seemingly contradictory result may relate to research on stereotype threat, which suggests that the prospect of being stereotyped triggers feelings of anxiety and self-doubt among youth from marginalized groups (Steele and Aronson, 1998). It may be that any ethnic treatment—

positive or negative—makes students feel that individuals perceive them as “different” and leads to heightened anxiety.

Nativity differences in the Latino populations in each location of residence largely explained differences in the daily depressive symptoms and daily anxiety of Latino youth in NC and LA but did not explain the differences in daily happiness. Proportionally more foreign-born youth resided in both urban and rural NC than in LA. Compared to US-born Latinos, foreign-born Latinos were both more likely to be happy and more likely to experience depressive symptoms. These results suggest that both acculturative stress and immigrant optimism are at work. On the one hand, acculturative stress associated with migration places foreign-born youth at risk for mental health disorders (Padilla and Duran, 1995). On the other, immigrant optimism increases the likelihood that youth will feel happy, joyful, and calm upon moving to the US (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

Despite experiencing more discrimination than youth in LA, Latino youth in urban and rural NC consistently expressed higher levels of daily happiness than youth in LA. This greater happiness largely stemmed from differences in the prevalence of positive social interactions. Regardless of nativity status, Latino youth in both urban and rural NC experienced more positive social interactions than Latino youth in LA. The results strongly support the segmented assimilation model by demonstrating that the social contexts of reception influence the adaptation of children of immigrants (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). Because they tend not to live in ethnic enclaves or attend ethnically segregated schools, Latino youth living in a new receiving community such as NC are more likely to have both positive and negative social interactions outside of their ethnic group and these interactions strongly affect their daily well-being.

We found that ethnic identification reduced youths’ sense of negative well-being, and family identification promoted daily happiness and reduced daily anxiety. The protective influences of family relationships operated on a daily basis as well. Positive daily relationships with parents increased youths’ daily psychological well-being. These results are consistent with other studies demonstrating how Latino adolescents overcome daily stressors by relying on ethnic and family ties for support (Yip and Fuligni, 2002).

There are several limitations to this study. First, though our results were robust to individual and school level fixed effect models that control for school and neighborhood characteristics, additional studies are needed to further explore how distinct characteristics of new and historical communities shape assimilation experiences by immigrant generation (Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). Second, while the majority of the Latinos in both our LA and NC samples were of Mexican descent, future studies should examine how settlement location affects other ethnic groups. Lastly, our results should be interpreted as associations not causation.

For educators, health providers, and policymakers, this study demonstrates the need to develop policies and programs that limit the prevalence of social discrimination and promote positive inter-group relations. Intervention research indicates that teachers can encourage racial-ethnic tolerance in the classroom context by creating opportunities for youth to cooperatively interact with different ethnic/racial groups (Molina and Witting, 2006).

Overall, this research suggests similar assimilation processes exist in new and historical receiving communities, but that the frequency of acculturation challenges and availability of support systems differ between them. Discrimination and social acceptance shape the psychological adaptation of Latino youth, no matter their settlement location. Latino youth in new receiving urban and rural communities, however, are exposed to both more social discrimination and social acceptance. To extend this research, additional comparative

studies of Latino and other minority immigrant youth living in historical and new receiving communities must be undertaken.

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Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Latino Students

	LA		NC Urban		NC Rural		Diff. ¹
	M	(SD)	M	(SD)	M	(SD)	
Student Characteristics							
Female	0.50	--	0.55	--	0.56	--	
Age (mean)	14.84	(0.38)	15.25	(0.88)	15.39	(0.82)	a,b
Nativity							
Generational Status ²							
First generation	0.17	--	0.72	--	0.60	--	a,b
Second generation	0.55	--	0.24	--	0.36	--	a,b,c
Third generation	0.26	--	0.04	--	0.03	--	a,b
Missing generation	0.02	--	0.00	--	0.00	--	
Age of Entry							
Born in U.S.	0.83	--	0.26	--	0.38	--	a,b
Under age 6	0.08	--	0.10	--	0.16	--	b
Ages 6–12	0.06	--	0.36	--	0.31	--	a,b
Ages 13 or more	0.01	--	0.28	--	0.16	--	a,b,c
Missing age of entry	0.03	--	0.00	--	0.00	--	
Country of Birth							
United States	0.83	--	0.26	--	0.38	--	a,b
Mexico	0.09	--	0.37	--	0.38	--	a,b
Central America or Caribbean ³	0.02	--	0.20	--	0.25	--	a,b
South America	0.02	--	0.17	--	0.00	--	a,c
Missing country of birth	0.03	--	0.00	--	0.00	--	
Country of Heritage							
Mexico	0.76	--	0.46	--	0.63	--	a,b,c
Central America or Caribbean ³	0.11	--	0.29	--	0.34	--	a,b,c
South America	0.06	--	0.21	--	0.02	--	a,c
Other Latino ⁴	0.08	--	0.04	--	0.01	--	b
Family Characteristics							

	LA		NC Urban		NC Rural		Diff. ¹
	M	(SD)	M	(SD)	M	(SD)	
Two-parent family	0.69	--	0.69	--	0.76	--	
Parent graduated high school	0.77	--	0.58	--	0.39	--	a,b,c
N=	253		114		96		

¹ Indicates statistical differences (p<.05) between the samples using T-tests with satterthwaite adjustment for unequal variances to compare differences in means and chi-square tests to compare differences in proportions: a=LA vs. NC urban; b=LA vs. NC rural, c=NC urban vs. NC. rural. LA=Los Angeles, NC=North Carolina.

² Second and third-generation youth include a small number born abroad to U.S. citizens.

³ Of the Caribbean, students were only from Puerto Rico or the Dominican Republic.

⁴ This group largely consists of 3rd generation Latinos whose country of heritage could not be identified.

Table 2

Mean Differences in Average Daily Psychological Well-Being, Discrimination, Social Acceptance, and Social Identity of Latino Students

	LA	NC Urban	NC Rural	
	M (SD)	M (SD)	M (SD)	Diff.¹
A. Daily Psychological Well-Being				
Daily happiness	3.38 (0.81)	3.64 (0.98)	3.62 (0.88)	a,b
% days moderately-extremely happy	70.39 (37.90)	73.69 (31.69)	75.12 (27.84)	
Daily depressive symptoms	1.45 (0.55)	1.67 (0.65)	1.69 (0.72)	a,b
% days with moderate-extreme depressive symptoms	7.61 (16.70)	12.62 (19.85)	14.28 (24.79)	a,b
Daily anxiety	1.58 (0.56)	1.71 (0.64)	1.76 (0.64)	b
% days with moderate-extreme anxiety symptoms	8.22 (17.20)	11.20 (21.60)	11.83 (21.47)	
B. Discrimination, Social Acceptance, and Social Identity				
Discrimination				
Perceived likelihood of discrimination	2.09 (0.98)	2.54 (1.19)	2.86 (1.07)	a,b,c
% days of negative ethnic treatment	1.82 (5.82)	3.81 (10.02)	6.59 (17.57)	b
Social Acceptance				
Positive school climate	3.40 (0.93)	3.89 (1.01)	3.67 (1.12)	a,b
Adult school encouragement	3.79 (1.13)	4.10 (1.07)	4.02 (1.10)	a
% days of positive ethnic treatment	0.03 (0.10)	0.12 (0.24)	0.12 (0.25)	a,b
Social Identity				
Ethnic identification	3.71 (0.72)	4.19 (0.56)	4.16 (0.60)	a,b
Family identification	3.69 (0.76)	4.00 (0.59)	3.84 (0.68)	a
% days got along with parents	76.11 (24.92)	69.06 (32.60)	70.51 (30.65)	a
% days spent time with family	82.66 (22.30)	81.77 (25.99)	80.34 (28.61)	
N=	253	114	96	

NOTE:

¹ Indicates statistical differences ($p < .05$) between the samples using T-tests with sattertwait adjustment for unequal variances to compare differences in means: a=LA vs. NC urban; b=LA vs. NC rural; c=NC urban vs. NC rural. All daily measures were observed over a 14-day period. LA=Los Angeles, NC=North Carolina.

Table 3

Effects of State of Residence, Discrimination, Foreign-born Status, Social Acceptance, and Social Identity on Daily Psychological Well-Being

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Daily Happiness	Daily Depressive Symptoms	Daily Anxiety
	b (s.e.)	b (s.e.)	b (s.e.)
A. Baseline			
North Carolina urban vs. LA	0.29 (0.09) **	0.20 (0.08) *	0.12 (0.08)
North Carolina rural vs. LA	0.28 (0.10) **	0.20 (0.08) *	0.17(0.09) *
B. Foreign-Born			
North Carolina urban vs. LA	0.22 (0.08) **	0.06 (0.07)	0.05 (0.08)
North Carolina rural vs. LA	0.23 (0.09) *	0.10 (0.07)	0.12 (0.07) †
Foreign-born vs. US-born	0.15 (0.08) †	0.29 (0.08) ***	0.15 (0.08) †
C. Discrimination Experiences			
North Carolina urban vs. LA	0.22 (0.08) **	0.03 (0.07)	0.02 (0.07)
North Carolina rural vs. LA	0.25 (0.08) **	0.03 (0.06)	0.07 (0.07)
Foreign-born vs. US-born	0.15 (0.08) †	0.26 (0.07) ***	0.13 (0.08)
Perceived likelihood of discrimination	-0.03 (0.03)	0.09 (0.02) ***	0.08 (0.02) **
Negative ethnic treatment	-0.15 (0.08) †	0.22 (0.09) *	0.18 (0.09) †
D. Social Acceptance			
North Carolina urban vs. LA	0.12 (0.06) †	0.06 (0.08)	0.04 (0.07)
North Carolina rural vs. LA	0.19 (0.08) *	0.05 (0.07)	0.08 (0.07)
Foreign-born vs. US-born	0.04 (0.08)	0.31 (0.07) ***	0.15 (0.07) *
Perceived likelihood of discrimination	0.03 (0.02)	0.06 (0.02) **	0.05 (0.02) *
Negative ethnic treatment	-0.17 (0.08) *	0.22 (0.09) *	0.17 (0.09) †
Positive school climate	0.29 (0.04) ***	-0.12 (0.04) **	-0.09 (0.03) **
Adult school encouragement	-0.02 (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)	0.05 (0.02) ***
Positive ethnic treatment	0.13 (0.07) *	0.05 (0.04)	0.17 (0.04) ***
E. Social Identity			
North Carolina urban vs. LA	0.11 (0.07)	0.10 (0.08)	0.08 (0.06)
North Carolina rural vs. LA	0.20 (0.09) *	0.09 (0.06)	0.12 (0.07) †
Foreign-born vs. US-born	0.02 (0.08)	0.32 (0.06) ***	0.17 (0.07) *
Perceived likelihood of discrimination	0.02 (0.03)	0.08 (0.02) ***	0.07 (0.02) **
Negative ethnic treatment	-0.17 (0.07) *	0.22 (0.08) **	0.17 (0.09) †
Positive school climate	0.23 (0.03) ***	-0.08 (0.03) *	-0.04 (0.02) †
Adult school encouragement	-0.02 (0.03)	0.03 (0.02)	0.05 (0.02) **
Positive ethnic treatment	0.12 (0.07) †	0.06 (0.04)	0.17 (0.04) ***
Ethnic identification	0.04 (0.05)	-0.16 (0.06) *	-0.17 (0.07) *

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Daily Happiness	Daily Depressive Symptoms	Daily Anxiety
	b (s.e.)	b (s.e.)	b (s.e.)
Family identification	0.18 (0.05)***	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.05 (0.02)*
Got along with parents	0.27 (0.03)***	-0.18 (0.04)***	-0.15 (0.03)***
Spent time with family	0.09 (0.06)	-0.08 (0.03)**	-0.04 (0.02) [†]
N=	6131	6140	6140

[†] p<.10,

* p<.05,

** p<.01,

*** p<.001

Note: Each letter heading represents a separate regression. All regressions include additional controls for students' sex, age, living in a two-parent family, having at least one parent with a high school degree, an indicator variable for missing values on parent education, and a dummy control for weekend days. Standard errors are adjusted for clustering at the school-level. Coefficients are unstandardized. LA=Los Angeles, NC=North Carolina.